

George Egan  
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# The Christological Position of the Armenian Church

*A paper read before a circle of Anglican  
Theologians in Oxford, England in 1943,  
By  
ARCHBISHOP TIRAN NERSOYAN  
(then a Vardapet)*



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*Published by the  
Diocese of the Armenian Church  
of America  
New York, N.Y. - 1962*

BT  
205  
T 57  
1962

## THE CHRISTOLOGICAL POSITION OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

The main line of advance of Christianity into Armenia was from the important base of Caesarea in Cappadocia, the neighboring country on the West of Armenia. Consequently the first fathers of the Armenian Church were connected with that center. There Gregory the Illuminator was educated and ordained. So were his successors. Some of these latter were even born in that city. Nerses the Great, the grandson of Gregory, was a close friend of St. Basil and the two Gregories, all four of them born between the years 328 and 330. The son and successor of Nerses, St. Sahag, was the leader and the driving spirit of the Armenian awakening of the fifth century and was also educated in Caesarea. These facts determined the Caesarean, and because of it the Alexandrian, orientation of the Armenian Church and her doctrine.

Again, when the religious and literary awakening took place in

Armenia the first half of the fifth century, the Council of Ephesus (421), the council in which the Alexandrian position became victorious, was the dominant factor in the doctrinal attitude of the whole Church. The first patristic works translated into Armenian were the writings of St. Basil, of Gregory the Thaumaturgas, of Gregory of Nazianzus, of Gregory of Nyssa, of John Chrysostom, of Ephraem the Syrian, of Sererianus of Emessa, of Athanasius of Alexandria, of Cyril of Alexandria, of Eusebius of Caesarea (his History and his Chronicon), of Philo the Hebrew, of Ipphanus of Salamis, of Cyril of Jerusalem, of Aristotle, of Proclus of Constantinople and few others. These writings were predominantly Alexandrian in their approach to the christological problems of the time. Thus the Alexandrian atmosphere of the Universal Church in the first half of the fifth century decided the orientation of the Armenian Church

which did not subsequently deviate from it.

The first indication of this tendency was the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the initiator of subsequent dualistic movements with regard to the persons of Christ. The occasion of this condemnation was a letter from Proclus, the Patriarch of Constantinople (446), to the Armenians and their Patriarch of the time, Sahak the Great. The act was the first official opposition to the heresy in the Armenian Church by a formal Church Council (in the thirties of the fifth century).

At the time when the reaction against the Council of Ephesus was setting in and the affirmation of this Council concerning the unity of the Person of Christ was being qualified, the Armenians were very busy with the consolidation of their national church established not very long ago. Consequently the first and the most important phase of the nature controversy and of the Chalcedonian reaction to the Ephesian position did not echo very strongly in Armenia. In 451, at the date of Chalcedonian Council, which proclaimed a duality in Christ by distinguishing two natures in Him, Armenians were fighting a bloody war for their new faith against the Persians, who were trying to turn them back to heathenism and Mazdeism. The Persians were alarmed by the new and most potent factor of western penetration into Armenia, a country which they always wanted to keep in their orbit of influence and sought to reverse the

process of Christianization, which was carried on openly for about a century and a half.

When, after the successful resistance of the Armenians to this Persian attempt, the upheaval subsided and a comparatively quiet time followed, the Armenian Church took its stand with the antagonists of the new council of Chalcedon. This attitude became clear in the eighties of the fifth century, when the Armenian Catholicos-Patriarch of the time, John Mandakouni (478-490), condemned Chalcedon and the time of Leo. This was soon after the publication of Zeno's Henoticon ((82) prohibiting any discussion concerning the nature or natures of Christ.

It was about this time that the great polemical work of Timothy of Alexandria, nicknamed Aelurus, a staunch opponent of the Chalcedonian Council and its formula, was translated into Armenian in order to serve, presumably, as a text-book for the defense of what was subsequently called monophysitism as against dyophysitism. This book proved to be a formidable instrument of both defense and offence in the hands of monophysites in all the countries of the Near East including Armenia.

Zeno's Henoticon found a ready acceptance in the Armenian Church, it fitted admirably with the sentiments of the Armenians during that period, i.e., the second half of the fifth century. For the Armenians the hair-splitting disputes, so violently carried on in Byzantium after the Council of Ephesus, which they, i.e., the Armenians, thought had settled

the matter, were exceedingly irritating. When these quarrels were raging the Church in Armenia was in a life and death struggle for the defense of the barest essentials of the faith. The war, which had started in 451 against the Persians, dragged on decade after decade, until it ended in 485.

The reluctance of the Armenians to probe into the unfathomable depths of the mysteries of the faith in a way in which it was done in the West — reluctance which has always been expressed throughout subsequent centuries whenever Armenians were driven to deal with Chalcedonian Greeks — must be solely attributed to this disposition of theirs in the fifth century. They welcomed the Henoticon because it suited and encouraged this disposition. When they refused to make issue of the question of natures in Christ, they were neither philistines nor embeciles. Later, when they were forced by the circumstances to come into the arena of dogmatic disputation, they showed their keen and penetrating mind and fought with zeal and with a highly commendable competence. Some people make the superficial remark that the Armenian language was not adequate to express the niceties of the Greek, which were allegedly misunderstood or even not understood in the outlandish country of the Armenians. This of course is nonsense. The controversies were based on the Greek terms and conceptions and all the leaders of the Armenian Church in those centuries knew Greek as well as anybody else. What they actually

did was simply to vindicate the position which they had taken and held all along together with the Alexandrians, who presumably knew what they were talking about.

The first conciliar act against dyophysitism was passed in 506 under the Patriarch-Catholico Babgen (490-516), when adherence to Henoticon became official.

Chalcedon was unpalatable to the Armeians also for another reason. In 487 Emperor Zeno closed the school of Edessa and, as a result of this the Nestorians transferred their center of heterodox learning into Persia, and settling there, began to annoy the orthodox in the country. The result was a deputation by the latter, i.e., orthodox Persians, to the Catholico Babgen of Armenia, to whom they submitted a report that the "Nestorians of Persia were strengthened by the attitude of the bishops of Chalcedon." These Nestorians, then, regarded the Chalcedonian definition as the vindication of their own teaching, exactly in the same was as Nestorius himself considered Pope Leo his worthy and illustrious defender and torch-bearer according to his own statement in his book, which is called "Bazaar." The result of this report was the council mentioned above, under Patriarch Babgen, in which Georgian and Albanian bishops also took part.

The Greeks of course lost no time and spared no energy to try to exert pressure on the Armenians when the attitude of the latter became clear. The result of this pressure, however, was practically nil. An Armenian

council in 554, the second council convened in Dovin, after considering the position taken by the council of Justinian in 553, in which a supposed reconciliation of Cyril and Chalcedon was effected through the labours of the emperor and the "first scholastic theclegian" Leontius of Byzantium, affirmed its anti-Chalcedonian attitude and broke off relations with the dyophysite sees. This council of 554 considered the decision of Justinian's council nothing but a sugar-coating on the old bitter pill. The above mentioned second council of Dovin (under Nerses II, 548-557) also sanctioned the phrase in the trisagion "who wast crucified for us," which had already come into use previously since about the year 490.

Brutal dyophysite persecutions followed, particularly during the reigns of Justin and Maurice (565-600), throughout that part of Armenia which was under Byzantine hegemony. The result was nothing but bitterness and determination on the part of Armenians to hold fast to what they believed to be the true orthodox faith.

It is often said that the separation of the monophysites, even the very issue which was made of monophysitism, is due to the rising nationalism among the people of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire extending from Egypt to Armenia. This is true to a certain extent, but not being the whole truth, it is an error. It implies that there was no real dogmatic issue after Chalcedon as there was or arose after Nicaea and after Ephesus.

Thus it is implied that Chalcedon had solved the problem or at least had found the happy formula. But as both these implications are wrong, the issue which was left unsolved at Chalcedon or even missolved, has to be considered on its own merit by all honest historians, who should resist the temptation to escape into side issues.

It is true that from the fifth century onwards nationalism in Egypt and Syria and Armenia took a definite form and acquired a new strength. And this is particularly true of Armenia. But these nationalisms only provided sanctuaries in which what truth was embodied in monophysitism took refuge. The link between the rising nationalism in the countries east of the Roman Empire and monophysitism was merely coincidental. Perhaps without the rising nationalism of these countries monophysitism might have been hounded to death. But God's providence seems to have arranged otherwise. Perhaps, who knows, it was better for the Church that monophysitism shielded itself with these nationalistic sentiments and fought back.

It must not be forgotten that the Church in Byzantium and to a less extent that of Rome retreated a long distance from the point where Chalcedon had stood. Justinian's council of 553 and the acceptance of the Scythian formula that "one of the Trinity suffered on the cross," are landmarks in this retreat, for which credit is due to the perseverance of the monophysites.

Another immeasurably greater victory was won by the truth ex-

pressed in monophysitism through Pseudo-Dionysius and its influence both in the East and in the West. This book was written by a monophysite, in a monophysite atmosphere and to uphold monophysitism, as Duchesne asserts. It is significant that Pseudo-Dionysius was found to be dogmatically suspect only when the dualistic tendencies after Renaissance occupied the field of western thought.

The truth is that there was a vertical division in the Church at and after the Council of Chalcedon, which formulated an inconsistency and a contradiction. Nationalism in the East laid the issue flat and the division became horizontal and was regionalized. When the situation was thus polarized, Byzantium and Egypt finding themselves at either end, a break resulted, which was eventually fixed for all the centuries after the Arabic invasion.

When the Arabic invasion came, in the middle of the seventh century, the two poles formed ice and were frozen and the beautiful idea of a vast Christian empire, warmed by the Spirit enlivening the whole body — an idea to which Armenians devoted themselves whole-heartedly for many centuries — cracked and broke into pieces. It was a great pity. Jacob Baradaeus formed the Syrian Church into a separate unit. The Church of Alexandria became the Coptic Church, and the Armenians built their own national Church in close connection with the Georgians and the Albanians. There was no more hope of realizing the grand dream. The Sixth dyothelite

council of 680-681, a genuine corollary of Chalcedon, finally removed the possibilities of reconciliation, for which there were some hopes after the council of 553 which had undoubtedly taken a sound step.

After the rift the forces of disintegration worked themselves into the eastern block and caused nuisance for a little while. A divergence appeared in the monophysite group between the Syrians and the Armenians over the question whether the body of our Lord was corruptible or not. The issue had cropped up in Egypt between Julian and Serverus. But it had its repercussions also further north. In 728, however, when the breach was not yet wide between the Syrians and the Armenians, it was healed by an Armeno-Syrian council in Manazkert, under the Catholicos John of Ozun. Complete doctrinal union was achieved between the two churches and the teachings allegedly propounded by Severians and Julianists respectively were condemned without touching either Serverus or Julian. Doctrines implying patriconianism or docetism were condemned in ten anathemas arming the orthodox monophysite position and repudiating misrepresentations.

This was the last doctrinal dispute, in the fourth and fifth century style, in which the Armenian Church engaged. After that scholastic ideas and methods began to dominate the minds of the theologians, but only to defend what was already formulated. A new interest developed in philosophy and learning, which were used as weapons for an already

predetermined polemics, as was the case for the dyophysites.

### B. Dogmatic Considerations

The Nicaean definition, by declaring the Son as being of the same ousia and **therefore** of the same nature as the Father, cuts the roots of all metaphysical or ontological dualism (as distinct from moral dualism). The word 'therefore' is important in this statement. This conjunction condenses the monophysite argument into a word. It was the Son who, in accordance with and in obedience to the will of the Father, "economised" redemption. If the Son was of the same nature as the Father, then no room for a second nature was left in his person. One ousia of the Godhead, **therefore** one nature. One being Christ, **therefore** one nature. By this argument monophysites stood on Nicaea as upon a rock.

But then what about the Incarnation, Christ eating, walking Christ being man, a perfect, a and sleeping and dying? about complete man. The answer has been that Christ's manhood was itself an **economy**. The word is the key to the whole problem. Incarnation in all its aspects was an act of the Son in accordance with the will of the Father. Christ **acted** full manhood, absolutely perfect manhood. He had body, soul, mind and everything which man had and was. He had, did, acted manhood by **economy**. The word is the great word of the Eastern Churches and especially of the monophysites. It is evident how from this position one is at once driven to jump into metaphysics and to the consideration

of the nature of man and of the creation.

The word economy is not a shibboleth for escaping away from the issue, as most westerns think it is whenever an orthodox seeks an accommodation in the face of a given situation. The idea of economy fully meets the issue in a manner in which dyophysites, real Chalcedonian dyophysites, as distinct from later orthodox dyophysites, cannot possibly hope to do. Of course, the dead end of the argument is whether matter or created things constitute an eternal absolute, coexistent with God, or whether they are a creation and therefore an act, a **doing** of God purely and simply. Eastern orthodoxy and especially monophysitism, in its use of the concept of economy, implies — though it does not seem to have put it down clearly and unequivocally — that matter is not eternal and therefore it is in the last resort an act of God, an act of the one ultimate personal Reality.

The next important point is that Nicaeans, and with them Cyril, conceived God as a concrete being. One concrete being could only have one nature. Nature is the organized whole of the qualities of a concrete being, **the function of a being as expressed**, as Gregory of Nazianzus teaches. Thus any kind of duality in the Son, the concrete being, will either produce an impossible mixture or else a fatal juxtaposition which will bring redemption to nought. That such a dualism is fatal we now know too well. When you have an external God up in the air, it is easy to blow

from below and it will be dispelled. And it is this that has actually happened in modern times.

If we take the word nature as an abstract concept and distinguish two separate sets of qualities pertaining to Christ, if we conceive nature to be an abstraction, as an area to be divided up into sub-areas, so that we may be able to contemplate them one after the other, as our weakness demands — indeed, as the very constitution of our physical eyes demand with regard to material things — then we can legitimately speak of more than one nature. We can speak of the area which represents the aspect of manhood in Christ and the area which represents the aspect of divine manifestation in Christ. But then if we adopt this method, there is no reason why we should not distinguish in Christ, say, seven natures, such as the chemical, the vegetal, the animal, the rational, the spiritual, the angelic and the divine, this last nature being the ultimate and the most comprehensive one dominating and enveloping the lower natures. This argument is put forward by Timothy Aelurus simply by quoting a letter of Pope Julius of Rome written to Dionysius (?).

We can of course group these natures in two sets, the divine qualities and the human qualities, and thus have two natures, these natures being abstractions by analysis of the essence of the person. But we can distinguish two natures in the abstract only if we first accept one nature in the concrete belonging to a single essence or substance. Because if we don't go further and deeper than

this abstraction, the concept of God himself will evaporate into abstractions. Christ, or God for that matter, will be a bunch of qualities, with nothing behind them or under them to have those qualities. Chalcedonians, of course, were in no danger of proceeding into this extremely perilous blind alley. No, they took another equally perilous direction. They said, 'n effect, that each set of qualities belongs to a different things which has these qualities. In other words, the human nature of Christ belongs to the human substance in Him and his divine nature belongs to the divine substance in Him. These are practically the words of the definition of the Council. Now if the word substance is univocal, that is, if it is a single concept, then all the adjectives in the world can not make a Christ of two substances into one. This is what monophysites shouted at the dyophysites all along. If, they said, the human qualities of Christ are attributed only to the human element in Christ and divine qualities to the divine element in Him, how could the Son have suffered and died. Is it not the cast that the phenomena of suffering and dying are human phenomena in themselves? The communication of qualities or properties takes care of that — was the answer given by dyophysites. This answer could easily be countered by saying that this "communication" could only be and was and is an abstract operation, a moral attribution, a figure of speech. In other words, we ascribe human qualities to God and divine qualities to man,

but we do not assert that all these qualities actually and really belong to the one and same being. As to the reliance by dyophysites on the dogma of one person in Christ, it could be said that if the unity of Christ is in the person, and if this person is the unifying principle of the two separate substances — which together constitute the concrete reality — then the concept of person itself, like that of nature, becomes an abstraction.

Leontius of Byzantium, very uneasy under the formidable arguments of the monophysites, and trying to be truly loyal to the council of Ephesus and to Cyril, took up one of the substances, i.e., the human, and put it in the divine, and then asserted that both these substances had the one and same person. But you cannot do this unless you take the word substance equivocally, that is, unless you mean by human substance something which is not really substance. It looks as though Leontius went half way towards sound doctrine and stopped there.

In the true dyophysite circle of ideas there is no possibility of a link between God and man. There is no place for theosis. Hence for dyophysites relation between God and man is ultimately moral. But moral relation is not real, ontological relation. The substitution of the former for the latter constitutes the weakness of those who stand with dyophysites. For them the divine image is not the image of something that itself is divine. For them grace is not a fluid, but it is a state, a form, without having anything in it that

has that shape. Greeks felt very uneasy in this atmosphere for a whole century, until they were provided with a palliative by the Council of 553 and the Scythian formula and still later by Leontius of Byzantium. Rome on the contrary sat comfortably on the Chalcedonian formula.

The essence of monophysitism is the rejection of any kind of synthesis in Christ. Christ is one and all His predicates are the predicates of His one being. Aelurus ridicules the *communicatio idiomatum* as a verbal vacuum. And indeed this argument of "the communication" is an instrument with which you cannot touch reality.

Monophysites constantly repeat that by asserting two natures in Christ dyophysites introduce a second (sometimes called fourth) nature into the Trinity, because after the Ascension Christ did not cease to be what he was during the Incarnation. He was and is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Monophysites do use the expressions of divine nature and human nature when speaking of Christ. But they invariably join the phrase "by economy" to the human nature when referring to it.

Monophysites say Christ was of two natures. This expression presumably means that in the scheme of things we can differentiate between the nature of God and the nature of man when God and man are different beings. But in Christ there are no two beings, nor is he a composition of two beings, hence he is in one nature.

The human aspect of Christ's

being was assumed by economy. He voluntarily (another crucial word) became man. He assumed the form of manhood according to St. Paul. This form is not a separate being having a nature of its own. It is a mode of existence in which God entered time and space. The Son himself suffered voluntarily in his human nature according to economy. The suffering subject is God the Son himself. If this was not so, there would be no suffering at all, because it is only the subject that suffers. When monophysites speak of the human nature and then of the divine nature of Christ (usually they do this by using adverbs), they take the words in the abstract and simply classify the two modes of activity of the one Son in his one substance (*hypostasis*) and nature.

The word voluntarily has a special significance in connection with the Incarnation. The Son subjected himself to all the infirmities of humanity not by being constrained by the inner necessity of the nature of something which he joined to himself, that is, his body, but he became man and acted as man because he wanted to. It is no use to say with the dyophysites that the human nature subjected itself in all things to the divine nature or person. Apart from the fact that it didn't — otherwise there would be no suffering — the very fact that a substance exists on its own account makes that substance independent and therefore ultimately disobedient or at least self-willing.

From this it follows that our Lord's kenosis was in no way

necessary, but only voluntary, that is, he assumed body, he became man. Thus when the monophysites speak of the one person of Christ, they speak, unlike the dyophysites, of the one concrete, substantial reality of Christ, all the qualities of this one subject, one being, the Son, having one set of qualities forming his one nature, including his temporary corporeality in its perfectly physical sense. This conception, of course, is only possible if the body itself is conceived as being an act, an economy of God the Son together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Here the problem touches the doctrine of creation. It is difficult for me to say whether monophysites developed any difference with the Chalcedonians on the problem of creation.

When speaking of the dyophysite contention that our Lord was in two natures and in two substances, and that one nature subjected itself to the other nature, Armenian theologians of the seventh century, like many others, persistently ask: Were we then saved by the will of man? Were we saved by the will of man by which he subjected himself or itself? To this their opponents answered in the affirmative and eventually decided that Christ had two wills. Thus they made Jesus of Nazareth a pellagian. St. Cyril's answer to this was: "God in the form of man." For St. Cyril there is oneness of two natures and not a unification of two natures as asserted by Leo. By the Incarnation the Son gave himself as existence dated and situated, thereby becoming Jesus Christ. He was glorified in his divine

capacity and suffered in his human capacity. And here the word "capacity" is an abstract term. "Two natures," in the sense of two capacities, was an acceptable formula for the monophysites. (e.g. Nerses the Graceful among Armenian Church Fathers.) The difficulty was that at that time one could hardly accept *ousia* as an abstract term. And Chalcedon said our Lord had two *ousias*, when Nicaea had already said that the Son had the same *ousia* as the Father.

Many unfounded accusations have been levelled against monophysites. These the monophysites have repudiated by negations.

Not one nature of the body from Mary and of the Logos. But one nature of the Logos incarnate. The act of Incarnation did not add another nature on the Logos in a cumulative sense. He assumed corporeality. "Not that the Son of God took man so as to have another with him, but being perfect God in essence, he became at the same time perfect man, being incarnate from the Virgin". (St. Felix of Rome, quoted by Aelurus).

Not a conversion into flesh and bones, but assumption of flesh and bones. Not man in appearance, but concrete, real man. Not kenosis by diminution, but kenosis by economy and voluntarily, and fashioned in and from Mary. Thus Mary is an instrument of the Incarnation. Body from Mary also is an instrument of the Incarnation. Body as such, fleshly body is not eternal, but it is begun in time and ends in time. (See "The Seal of Faith" Knich

Hawatoy — pp. 41, 59). Thus Mary's role is in every way mediatic.

The term *theotokos*, however, is not a figure of speech, a kind of *communicatio idiomatum*. Mary was the real mother of God the Son. Only it must never be forgotten that the old conception has always been that the substance of a living being comes from the father. This belief is the basis of the story of the creation of the woman, as well as of the old attitude to woman. The woman gives to a being only its structure, its form. A man is only fashioned in his mother's womb. That is why Christ was not born of the will of man. The substance of Christ's being was supplied, so to speak, by the Spirit. Otherwise there would be no sense in the virgin birth. That is why the phrase from Mary is not in the partitive case, not an ablative of division, but an ablative of instrumentality, meaning "by Mary."

A somewhat inadequate though a striking analogy is used by an Armenian theologian of the sixth century. "The Son descended in the manner of the dew" he says. Son as spirit is like vapour. By kenosis he becomes like a drop. The drop is like any other drop. But it is the same substance as it was before. As nature belongs to *ousia*, the drop has one nature, but is the same nature as before. It is only a crude analogy, of course, and cannot be pushed too far.

The question of the incorruptibility of our Lord's body, which became a subject of controversy after the nature controversy, is closely connected with the prob-

lement of the nature of Christ. It would be only natural for monophysites to affirm that our Lord's body was incorruptible. But this affirmation did not mean that Christ had a heavenly body in any sense. Because it has been emphatically asserted that Christ's body was *passible*. The idea of incorruptibility is that Christ being sinless, his body could not be affected by the consequences of sin. I should think perhaps it could be said that he could not be ill. The Armenian Catholicos John of Ozoun, who presided at the council of Manazkert in 728, is inclined to be a Severian. But the doctrine of the Church precludes both Severianism and Julianism. The Julianists have been subject to slight persecution too. But our Lord's body is always said to be incorruptible in the above sense and the word is very frequent in Armenian church hymns.

The Armenian Church has shunned Severianism because the doctrine of the necessary corruptibility of our Lord's body can only be maintained on a dyophysite background and endangers redemption, as Harnack has pointed out. If corruptibility is necessary, then an independent element governed by its own laws enters into the person of Christ and an ontological dualism follows, with all its corollaries. Thus any necessary fleshly weakness in our Lord as well as any idea of unreality of his body have been repudiated.

### C. The Present Position

The Chalcedonian formula has of course come to stay. But the sense in which that formula was

taken has fortunately gone. This process of correction started with the condemnation of the Three Chapters. The monophysites opposition has certainly achieved its end. The assertion that one of the Trinity suffered on the cross did take the sting out of the formula, which never fitted eastern orthodoxy anyway. The Scythian formula all by itself was of course not sufficient, until its logical conclusions were worked out. The history of the Church, I believe, has worked out the implications under the pressure of common sense. Who thinks in terms of two wills in Christ now, except to describe the tension between the human and the divine in Christ. And any western theologian would really accept that the word *nature* in the Chalcedonian formula is an abstract term. What they overlook is that if the Chalcedonians had accepted it in that sense, i.e. as an abstract term, there would have been no quarrel. I do not mean that the whole field has been cleared up. There still exist in the West people who move in the atmosphere of the real Chalcedon. But I don't think they have much chance of survival.

That dyophysites have altogether abandoned their Chalcedonian position is quite clear. The Council of Chalcedon had taken the word *nature*, *person* and *substance* in their Nicaean sense and had applied them to Christ, thus undoing by implication what Nicaea had done. This was the real reason why that council incurred the stricture of the monophysites. Later dyophysites did exactly the opposite by taking the word *na-*

ture in a sense opposite to the one given to it at Nicea. Therefore there is no reason to perpetuate the right created by the old quarrel anymore, except perhaps with regard to the insignificant question as to whether it is good to take a theological term in two opposite senses. But it is the concept that is important and not the term as a mere word.

That this is so can be shown in a few words, in conclusion.

The central task of Nicaea was to assert the concreteness of God's being. It was necessary to conceive Him as one *ousia* or substance, one *physis* or nature, and three *hypostases* or persons. Thus *ousia* was the concrete entity, *physis* was coextensive with this concrete entity, and *hypostases* were three abstract universals, as meaning three functions or modes of life having their three organic centers, so to speak. By this description Nicaea excluded both tritheism and unitarianism.

Now, in accordance with this terminology, what Chalcedon said amounted to this: in Christ there were two concrete entities, two natures co-extensive with these, and one person as an abstract universal. It was this fact that raised the hue and cry, and quite rightly, because such a Christ could neither be a redeemer nor be any conceivable being at all. But for Chalcedonians, who were firmly established, it was a matter of authority and prestige to keep the formulae, which are the vessels of thought. So they emp-

tied the vessels of their former content and filled them with new stuff. But by the time this was done and passions had subsided, new factors prevented the healing of the breach. That this was so is proved by the fact that in the twelfth century Greeks and Armenians could not quite see why they should remain separate. (See Nerses the Graceful in his correspondence with Greeks from 1166-1173.)

We need not, therefore, quarrel about the terms as long as Chalcedonians really mean what orthodox monophysites have always meant. I think that, out of respect for incontestably imposing greatness of the dyophysite section of the Church, monophysites should take a favourable view of the Chalcedonian formula. They should do this in the way in which Nerses the Graceful has done, adhering, however, to the correct meaning of the formula. It is a little difficult to accept substance as an abstract term even in the case of Christ. But as *hypostasis* can legitimately be taken as a concrete entity, the situation can easily be saved. But we must be careful to use the words in their old senses with regard to the Blessed Trinity, of which the dogma has already been fixed beyond all cavil.

Thus we have every reason to believe that the reunion of the monophysites with the dyophysites is a matter of their having interest in and being alive to the problem of dogmatic reunion, which we hope will be realized in God's good time.